

## ELM PARK

At the intersection of Worcester and Washington Streets, in Wellesley Hills Square, is a 1.24 acre triangular park named Elm Park. The park got its name from the row of Elm trees which once surrounded it and it was the site of the Elm Park Hotel, that was torn down in 1908. In 1928, a clock tower was erected on the site under the direction of Park Commissioner Benjamin Proctor, Jr. The 65 feet high tower was designed to house the clock and bell of the old Shaw School. This school was given to the Town in 1814 by John Shaw and had been torn down. The clock was of special significance because it was made by Edward Howard, who, in 1840 built the first watch factory in America. The field stones in the tower came primarily from Wellesley and were given to the Town of Wellesley by Isaac Sprague.

The grounds around the clock tower have changed greatly over the years. When the land was first given to the Town by a group of residents in 1909, the plantings were simple. The Commissioners stated in the Town Report that year that they hoped a naturalized planting design would fit into the surrounding landscape and would be more appealing to the residents than an elaborate design. By 1960, tastes had changed and the Wellesley Hills Garden Club donated a variety of shrubs and ground covers to be used in an ornamental and flowering design around the base of the clock tower. These plantings have been recently modified again but most of the plants that were a gift of the garden club remain in Elm Park today. The most recent relocation of plant material was the result of an effort to reduce maintenance costs. High maintenance shrubs were relocated to the edge of the park while low maintenance and flowering shrubs were kept in the beds around the tower.

The Wellesley Hills Garden Club also donated an irrigation system for Elm Park. The system was installed in the mid-70's and is currently undergoing an upgrading and expansion. Part of the upgrading will involve utility groundwater currently draining away in the Cochituate Aqueduct which runs under the park. This upgrading will eliminate the need to use drinking water at this site for irrigation purposes.

All of these efforts have resulted in a beautiful focal point in the heart of Wellesley Hills.